

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

# REPORT

CD NO.

## East Germany

DATE DISTR. 26 May 1955

## Railroad Administration's Measures Against a Possible Strike of Railroad Employees

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(LISTED BELOW)**

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**SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.**

**THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION**

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1. The following observations were made in the area of RBD Berlin on 4 and 5 April 1955:
  - a. On 5 April, the VP guard was withdrawn from the telephone exchange of RBA 2/3. No VP guards have been observed at this RBA after that date.
  - b. The new duty schedule which went into effect on 1 April did not involve major changes at RBD Berlin. Only Sunday duty schedules were subject to major changes. The new Sunday schedule was most vehemently opposed by shunting personnel who refused to work a 12-hour shift. By order of the Ministry of Traffic, all railroad personnel who refused to work the new duty schedules will be discharged without prior notice. One of the most efficient shunting foremen at the Berlin-Schoeneweide railroad station refused to comply with the new schedule. When he was given dismissal notice, he recanted and worked the longest permissible shift on 5 April. Previously, there was a tacit agreement among the employees of RBA 2/3, according to which, personnel who lived outside Berlin ended their shift so as to be able to reach the next train to their places of residence. This practice was discontinued, and on a Sunday, one Heinrich (fnu), whose shift officially ended at 2200 hours, was not allowed to take the 2115 train but had to wait until midnight before he could go home. The release of employees at the end of shifts is daily controlled by RBD Berlin.
2. Between 1 and 5 April, it was learned that the new duty schedule was accepted by employees of RBA 1, Berlin. The shunting personnel resents, however, the new Sunday schedule which envisages a 12-hour shift. One Hoffmann (fnu), chief of the Department for Rolling Stock at RBD Berlin,<sup>2</sup> Schmidt (fnu), assistant station master in the area of RBD Schwerin, and Voelkner (fnu), station master at Berlin-Greifswalderstrasse were<sup>1</sup> given dismissal notices because they had opposed the new duty schedule.
3. On 1 April, the railroad personnel employed at the Haldensleben railroad station in the area of RBD Magdeburg were informed that they would

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henceforth have to work 12-hour shifts. This measure has been taken with a view of reducing railroad personnel by one sixth. The railroad men were not to be paid higher wages in spite of longer working hours. At a rally of railroad men held on 2 April, the railroad men spoke against the new regulations. Their spokesman, one Schittchen (fnu), was given dismissal notice at the end of the rally. The Haldensleben railroad station was occupied by reinforced details of the transportation police. Train personnel reported that the Magdeburg and Dessau railroad stations were also occupied by reinforced transportation police details on 2 April.<sup>1</sup>

4. The introduction of the new duty schedule which went into effect on 1 April, created much unrest among the personnel of the Seddin marshalling yard. Strikes would probably have occurred if major KVP details had not appeared on the scene.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that the new duty schedule had officially been discussed by railroad personnel before it went into effect. All railroad men at Seddin including SED and trade union members rejected the new duty schedule. The resolution was transmitted to one Hoffmann (fnu), chief of the Administrative Department at RBD Berlin. Hoffmann who expressed his satisfaction about this resolution has been discharged. In the meantime the situation has eased, but the KVP was ordered to remain at Seddin until 15 April 1955.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Comment. The economy measures mentioned were connected with an overall economy drive involving the increase of work norms and reduction of wages. The economy measures were demanded at the 21st Plenary Session of the SED Central Committee and at the Traffic Conference held in Leipzig in early February. The bitterness of the railroad men about these measures made the GDR authorities fear a strike similar to that of 17 June 1951. Ruthless measures were taken to prevent the outbreak of such a strike. The recent SED action against "enemy agents and saboteurs" is possibly connected with these measures.

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2. Comment. Ludwig Hoffmann was known to be chief of the Department for Rolling Stock at RBD Berlin.

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